

Handling Criticism

People who dream big dreams for God and proceed to put legs under them are always open to criticism. Some people don't grasp the dream. Others are jealous because they didn't have it first. And, I have come to suspect, there are some people who think their task in the world is to tear down the dreams of others.

You have a dream, don't you? If you do, it is a given, then, that you will face your share of criticism. What should you do about it?

If it is a legitimate criticism, learn from it. The people and corporations that fail are the ones so thin-skinned they cannot hear valid complaints. A true friend will take the risk of speaking the truth because he cares about you. A legitimate complaint about some practice in the church or service for the Lord can be an insight for improving it.

If the criticism is mistaken or mean-spirited, rise above it. Maintain the high ground under fire. There is no victory worth winning that comes from picking up the mud thrown at you and slinging it back. If you must respond, just use facts. Try never to give in to the temptation to get even or to respond in kind. Jesus is the perfect example of turning the other cheek and returning good for evil.

When you are criticized, hold fast to your dream and continue pursuing it. Critics win if you forsake the quest for it to fight them. Your best answer will always be to see your task through to completion. Theodore Roosevelt had a credo about the criticism which leaders take for their daring and boldness. *It is not the critic who counts: not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, and comes short again and again, because there is not effort without error and shortcoming; who does actually try to do the deed; who knows the great enthusiasm, the great devotion, and spends himself in a worthy cause; who, at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly.*

Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs even though checkered by failure, than to rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy nor suffer much because they live in the gray twilight that knows neither victory nor defeat.

Today presents the chance to do something significant for God and His church. Don't let critics turn you aside from doing your duty, finishing an open task, and pursuing your dream.
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